

Business Plan North Fruita Desert Campground

BLM Grand Junction Field Office
Grand Junction, Colorado

Fee Site Area Description

The fee site is a 37-unit primitive campground located at the north end of Mesa County Road 18, north of Fruita, Colorado. The facility is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Grand Junction Field Office and is located in the North Fruita Desert (NFD) Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). The campground occupies about 40 acres in the heart of the mountain bike trail system. It primarily serves the mountain bike visitors, most of whom are tent campers. The facilities include individual camp sites, as well as two group sites, with fire rings and picnic tables. Each site has parking for two to four vehicles. Four vault pit toilets are located within walking distance of each cluster of campsites. Trail and campground maps are available from the information kiosks on site.

Description of Customers Who Use the Area

Visitors tend to be young adults, typically between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age. Most visitors are vacationing, in the valley visiting NFD and other nearby bicycling opportunities. Their average stay is estimated at three nights. Most of the motorized and equestrian visitors are from the nearby communities and do not use the campground.

Visitation is seasonal due to seasonal variations in temperature in the Grand Junction area. The spring season begins in March and continues through June. In the hotter summer months, overnight use declines. Visitor use increases as the day-time temperatures drop in September and the use season continues into November in an average year.

Establish the Objective for Use of Fee Receipts

The objective of charging a fee to camp at the North Fruita Desert Campground is to improve on-the-ground management of the campground. Funds from the fees will contribute primarily to campground maintenance, however; fees will also be used for public education and information, such as maps and information packets. Additionally, fee revenue will also support an on-site campground host to provide visitor safety and on-site management.

List and Describe the Key Components of the Area /Site/Project

The campground is at the heart of the NFD SRMA which includes over 72,000 acres and 250 miles of designated recreation routes primarily devoted to non-motorized recreation activities. The campground provides access to arguably some of the finest single track mountain-biking the country has to offer.

The campground facility consists of the 37 campsites, six sanitation facilities, fencing, signing, and graveled roads.

Recreation Use By Major Component

The vast majority of the campers are regional and national mountain bikers primarily from the Front Range communities of Colorado. Based on traffic counter data and park ranger field observations, the BLM estimates approximately 1,500 campsites were occupied in the 2007 and roughly 1,600 occupied campsites in the 2008.

Identify the Relevant Costs Expended or Needed to Operate the Fee Project

The estimated cost to maintain the campground on an annual basis includes:

1. Maintaining information kiosks and visitor information signs	\$2,000
2. Pump outhouses	2,000
3. Clean camp sites	4,000
4. Support camp volunteer host (6 months)	2,500
5. Repairs and maintenance of infrastructure	6,000
6. <u>Visitor services and patrols</u>	<u>5,000</u>
Estimated Total	<u>\$21,500</u>

Receipts

No fees are charged at this time.

Fee Calculation Process

Colorado State Parks has a developed campground located 5 miles south of the NFD campground. The facility includes showers, potable water onsite, laundry facilities, sanitary dump station as well as a lake front location. User fees range from \$14 to \$22 per site per night. Tent camping is available at a local commercial facility for \$29 per night, and RV sites are about \$38 per night, including all hook ups.

Proposed Fees for the Site

Based on the above information, we are proposing a fee of \$10 per campsite per day as a reasonable and acceptable fee for use of the North Fruita Desert campground. Although, acceptance of the new interagency pass may have a major impact on the fees collected at this site but as the interagency pass program is relatively new, it is difficult to ascertain precise impact to fee collections at this time. There are several National Parks and BLM Fee sites in close proximity to make it worthwhile for local residents to invest in the pass but the majority of the campers utilizing the proposed fee site are not from the

commuting area therefore it would not likely benefit local users to develop and implement a local pass for the North Fruita Desert campground.